

Join The Journey

The Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan Newsletter

June 2009



MVA Launches Motorcycle Safety Campaign

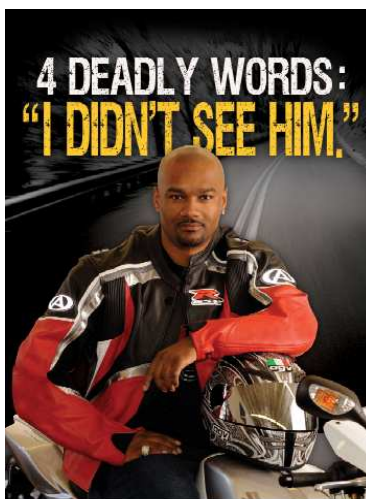
The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) recently launched a motorcycle safety campaign for riders and vehicle drivers as part of Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month in May. Motorcycle crashes have steadily increased in recent years rising almost 40 percent from 2003 to 2007. For Maryland in 2007, there were 1,841 motorcycle-involved crashes where 96 people lost their lives. These fatalities comprise 15.6 percent of all traffic fatalities, up from 13 percent in 2006.

"Motorcycle safety and awareness is a two-way street," said MVA Administrator John Kuo. He warned with warmer temperatures more motorcycles will be on the roadway, "and all of us have a responsibility to do our part to ride and drive safely."

The campaign, which is part of Maryland's overall traffic safety campaign **"Choose Safety for Life,"** includes materials for both riders and motorists. "Drive Aware - We're Out There" materials provide tips for motorists including watching out for motorcyclists, signaling intent, and allowing plenty of space when following a motorcycle. For motorcyclists, the campaign urges riders to be

more visible, to give themselves space and time to react to roadway situations, and to be courteous and respect other road users.

As part of the effort, the MVA hosted "Fast Track Licensing," an initiative geared to highlight the importance of safe motorcycle operation and encourage licensure for all motorcycle operators. With fast track, the learner's permit requirement and 14-day waiting period was waived, the operator was allowed one opportunity to retake a failed test on the same day, and if the knowledge and on-cycle skills test was successful, the individual could leave MVA with a Class M license or learner's permit.



Look twice for Motorcycles. Maryland SHA Choose Safety for Life. W.V.

SHSP Update

Task Force Recommendations Approved by General Assembly

Several recommendations from the Task Force to Combat Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Alcohol included in Governor Martin O'Malley's 2009 legislative package were passed by the Maryland General Assembly including the following:

- Mandate one-year driver's license suspensions for persons twice convicted of any of Maryland's impaired driving statutes (HB 293 & SB 262); passed with significant amendments.
- Outlaw the "consumption" of alcohol by those under 21; penalize the same with driver's license sanctions; and criminalize the provision of alcohol to those under 21 (HB 299 & SB 261); passed with amendments (consumption was included in the adopted legislation, however it requires enforcement to prove possession first).
- Double the period for a subsequent Probation Before Judgment (PBJ) finding for impaired driving offenses (HB 301 & SB 259); passed without amendments.

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Legislative Session Cont.

- Provide for fines and incarceration for persons violating a Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) imposed driver's license alcohol restriction (HB 305 & SB 263); passed without amendments.

The Task Force final report and findings, which were submitted to the Governor and General Assembly in October 2008, have been hailed as one of the most comprehensive and realistic reports ever developed by a legislatively established task force.



Baltimore County Pilots Traffic Safety-Crime Program

Baltimore County was selected as one of seven pilot sites to test Data Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS), an operational model that uses integration of location-based crime and traffic safety data to determine the most effective and efficient methods for deploying law enforcement resources.

The program is a joint effort of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). The program was developed to address the increasing demands and limited resources for law enforcement which requires law enforcement executives to prioritize competing demands for service.

The result is often a detriment to both traffic law enforcement and crime prevention. Because crime and crashes often occur in close proximity and many crimes involve the use of a vehicle, the program can use traffic stops to identify criminals and impact crashes simultaneously.



Local data is used to conduct traffic and crime analysis which allows for a deeper understanding of the problem. The approach provides efficiency in resource deployment, is a tool for fiscal constraint, and gives an unbiased basis for making strategic and tactical decisions.

During the Baltimore program, which was conducted from March to December 2008, there were over 51,000 patrol hours devoted to the program which resulted in 1,169 arrests, 20,945 citations, and 31,010 warnings. For more information on the program, contact Tom Gianni at tgianni@sha.state.md.us.

Workshop on Transportation Safety Integration

Integrating safety into the transportation planning process was the focus of a day-long workshop conducted by the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Safety. The first part of the workshop focused on developing an understanding of transportation planning, the Highway Safety Improvement Program, the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, and Transportation Safety Planning concepts and terminology.

The workshop brought together Maryland engineers, planners, traffic safety specialists, funding

professionals, and operations personnel to develop an understanding of the transportation planning process and to explore opportunities to integrate safety. In breakout sessions, participants focused on what challenges exist for safety integration, and how those challenges could be addressed.

A key benefit was bringing together all the relevant partners at the State Highway Administration (SHA) who are involved in the transportation planning process and resulted in numerous suggestions to improve existing processes.

One recommendation involved data sharing throughout SHA to help stakeholders understand where traffic safety problems exist, and to look at new ways to use crash data in the decision making processes, etc. A major focus of the discussion was the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) which was significantly strengthened by The Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which doubled its size to approximately \$1B per year and moved it from a "set-aside" to a core stand-alone program.

The workshop will help Maryland meet new HSIP requirements and improve the way safety is addressed in the planning process and the resulting highway projects. A follow-up workshop is planned to address implementation of the action steps the participants developed during the day. For more information on the workshop, contact Mary Deitz at SHA Office of Planning, mdeitz@sha.state.md.us.



Regional SHSP Update

Baltimore Region

During prom and graduation season, the Baltimore Region aired radio ads produced as part of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's (BMC) Regional Safety campaign that was launched in 2008. The goal of the campaign is to reduce the number of young driver crashes, deaths, and severe injuries in the region caused by distracted driving. It complements the Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan by educating parents and their teens about the risks of multi-tasking when driving and how to best avoid those risks.



Distracted driving accounted for over 500 fatalities and 95,000 injuries during the 10-year period between 1997 and 2006 in the Baltimore region. Because vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for 15-20 year olds, the campaign focused on distracted driving given this age group's increasing use of devices that may contribute to distracted driving, such as cell phones, mp3 players, and other hand-held devices.

One way to address this issue is to actively engage parents. Statistics show that laws, and rules set by parents, influence teen driving. Although Maryland has a Graduated Drivers License program, parents can enforce additional rules such as not allowing cell phones, texting, or friends in the car. Parents can also influence their teens by acting as a good example. Other parent tips pro-

vided by the campaign include the following:

- Put down the cell phone. Wait to make calls and do not pick up incoming calls while driving.
- Avoid eating while driving.
- Use the car's audio system wisely. Keep the volume at a level that is not distracting and allows you to hear sirens on emergency vehicles.
- Pre-set your electronics. If you are using a GPS or DVD system, set it before you leave or pull over to a safe spot to enter data or adjust settings.
- Set family rules. Make sure all family members know what the rules are for driving without distractions and what the consequences are for breaking those rules.

For more information on the campaign, visit the BMC web site at www.drivesafebaltimore.com.

Southern Maryland Region

The Southern Maryland region continued to work the Community Traffic Safety Program (CTSP) task forces to develop and implement pilot projects that support the region's traffic safety priorities (preventing impaired driving, reducing speed, keeping vehicles on the roadway, and developing safe young drivers). CTSP coordinators met with representatives of the Tri-County Council on a quarterly basis to discuss initiatives and evaluate progress.

Rebecca Martin, the CTSP coordinator in Charles County, will be leading the impaired driving effort for the region. Some of the initiatives include variable message boards during statewide and local enforcement efforts, sobriety checkpoints and saturation pa-

trols, a Tipsy Taxi program in St. Mary's County to make sure impaired drivers stay off the road, a designated driver rewards program for Calvert County restaurant patrons, and regionwide funding program so law enforcement officer's can attend Maryland's DUI Institute.

Jackie Beckman, St. Mary's County CTSP is leading the "Southern Maryland Media Campaign", an initiative which supports statewide messaging for *Click It or Ticket*, *Smooth Operator*, and the *Checkpoint Strikeforce*, as well as local initiatives for speed, young drivers and motorcycles. Regional activities include web site banners, billboards, radio spots, and site-specific messaging for attendees at the Blue Crabs Baseball stadium, Maryland International Raceway, and the Solomon's Island Tiki Bar opening.



Debbie Jennings, CTSP Coordinator for Calvert County, is leading the developing safe young drivers initiative for the Southern Maryland region. Activities include the St. Mary's County Public School System's commitment to conducting traffic safety programs during the school year, Charles County Student Government Association's development of student led program in each high school, and Calvert County's Graduated Driver's License (GDL) enforcement initiative and District Court-referred offender program to the *Alive at 25* program.

Regional SHSP Update Cont.

Southern Maryland Cont.

As part of the effort to reduce the prevalence of young driver crashes and injuries in the area, the Southern Maryland DriveCam program was piloted in September 2008, and an independent evaluation is underway to determine whether this technology decreases a teen's risk while behind the wheel.

For more information on the Southern Maryland SHSP initiative, contact Wayne Clark at wclark@tccsmd.org.

Western Region

The Western Region is moving forward on several traffic safety issues including speeding, impaired driving, older drivers, young drivers, and run-off-the-road crashes. Allegany County has purchased two radar units and four portable breath testers to help law enforcement officers detect and apprehend drivers who exceed the posted speed limit and those whose blood alcohol content (BAC) is above the legal limit of .08 (drivers age 21 and older).

Garrett County has started a "CarFit" program which allows older drivers to check out how well their personal vehicles "fit" them. In some cases, drivers can purchase adaptive equipment such as a seatbelt adjuster, hand-dibar, or expanded mirrors to make driving safer and more comfortable. The program also provides senior drivers with safe driving tips and information on how they can remain safe and mobile. The County will also be conducting a child safety seat check in July. Washington County is using portable variable message signs at high schools to educate young drivers on safe driving. To keep drivers on the roadway, the region will also be installing edgeline and center-

line rumble strips which warn drivers when they are in danger of running off the road. For more information on Western Region activities contact John Woford at jwoford@sha.state.md.us.



Emphasis Area Update

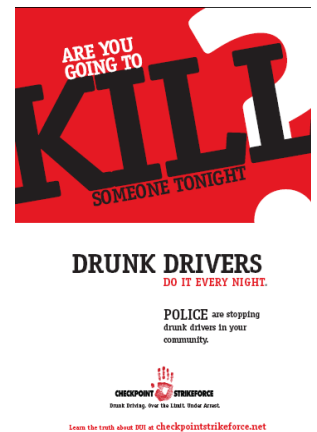
Impaired Driving

For the first five months of 2009, the Impaired Driving Emphasis Area team has been working with stakeholders from the occupant protection and aggressive driving teams on a combined Chief's Challenge program. Chief's Challenge is a competitive annual effort where state and local law enforcement agencies across the state challenge officers, deputies, and troopers to conduct enhanced educational and enforcement initiatives to prevent impaired and aggressive driving, and increase seat belt use. Approximately 80 agencies, including all State Police barracks, participated in the challenge. The 2008 Recognition event was attended by nearly 400 enforcement partners from more than 70 different police agencies/barracks. At the ceremony 26 individual agencies and barracks were recognized as the best in their category.

A major focus for the Impaired Driving Emphasis Area is the annual high visibility Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign that involves sobriety checkpoints and is conducted throughout the Mid-Atlantic region in Maryland, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Virginia, and West Virginia. An evaluation conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Region III

Office resulted in a revised campaign where highly visible DUI enforcement efforts will occur in waves throughout the latter part of the year (July–December) and sustained enforcement efforts will be the focus of the January–June months. This will help to alleviate the stresses put on enforcement resources, and support the media.

In addition to Checkpoint Strikeforce, the team, through the Impaired Driving Coalition (IDC) and the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO), is developing a social norming campaign which will address the misperceptions that foster high-risk drinking, particularly among young people. The *DUI is 4 Losers*, which is currently being focus tested, will roll out in January 2010 to correspond with Super Bowl activities. The team is also working on a young driver campaign that will be developed jointly with the Young Driver Emphasis Area Team.



In keeping with a recommendation from Maryland's Task Force to Combat Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Alcohol, a DUI Tracking System is being studied. A Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC) task force has been established to assess the agency systems that should be part of the structure. For more information on the Impaired Driving Emphasis Area team, contact Captain Norm Dofflemeyer of the Maryland State Police at ndofflemeyer@mdsp.org or Lisa Aguila Lemaster with MHSO at laquilalemaster@sha.state.md.us.

Emphasis Area Team Update Cont.

Occupant Protection

Several media events were held to launch the annual *Click It or Ticket* campaign at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, MD to reach the Washington, DC media market, at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel High School in Essex, Maryland to reach residents in the Baltimore area, and at the Shorebirds Stadium in Salisbury for the Eastern Shore. During the campaign, State Highway Administration overhead dynamic message signs were used to promote the *Click It or Ticket* message and \$225,000 media was purchased statewide on broadcast and cable television.



To reach high risk audiences, the campaign also used radio spots. An urban belt use program featured contest giveaways and "van hits" at participating Wendy's, and an outreach program to the Hispanic community utilized an interactive messaging format displayed on the radio station's homepage. A cross promotion was also conducted on two of Maryland's most powerful radio stations, 105.7 and Mix 106.5. The promotion featured the "Buckle Up Tough Guy," and "Hey Babe, Buckle Up" messages to reach males age 18-44 and women to encourage them to convince their significant others to buckle up.

The campaign also featured the "Buckle Up for a Buck" program, where local banks and credit unions donated funds to be distributed by law enforcement officers to drivers that were buckled. Drivers that were not buckled received a verbal warning and educational materials. For more information on Maryland's occupant

protection program, contact Tim Richards at trichards@sha.state.md.us.

Reduce Distracted Driving

The Distracted Driving Emphasis Area Team is working on hosting an e-seminar/webinar with law enforcement to discuss ways to modify existing reporting tools and to assess current distracted driving laws. Two more groups in Maryland have indicated their support for a ban on cell phone use including the Maryland Highway Safety Foundation, which is recruiting 100 businesses with 100,000 employees to adopt bans, and the National Safety Council which called for nationwide ban on cell phone use while driving. Driving this effort to ban cell phones is research which shows the following:

- "Using a cell phone while driving makes you four times as likely to be involved in a crash" (AAA Foundation, *Majority of Americans Wrongly Believe Hand-Free Cell Phones are Safer than Hand-held Devices according to a New AAA Foundation Study*, December 4, 2008)
- The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators reports a Washington, D.C. study shows 80 percent of crashes AAMVA reports local (DC) study says 80% of crashes involve driver inattention with twenty percent attributed to drowsiness. Research also shows that the younger the driver the more difficulty in handling distractions. (AAMVA, *The Multi-tasking Driver: Research Shows Real Dangers*, Move Magazine, Fall 2008 Vol. 13 No. 4)

For more information on the Distracted Driver Emphasis Area team contact Dave Madaras with the Chesapeake Safety Council at

dave@chesapeakeesc.org, or Lolita Stewart from MHSO at lstewart@sha.state.md.us.

Older Drivers

The Older Driver Emphasis Area Team is continuing to conduct outreach to Clinical Chiefs at the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins Hospitals, and CME programs at community hospitals announcing availability of lectures on medical fitness of elderly folks to drive. It is anticipated a lecture on Medical Fitness to Drive of Older Drivers will be added this year to the curriculum of the University of Maryland Medical Center Shock Trauma Nurse Lecture Series, which is presented three to four times a year.



A presentation about assessing senior citizens for medical fitness to drive was presented to a large clinical group at the Andrews Air Force Base in February. Presentations are planned for clinicians at the Sinai and Good Samaritan Hospitals in Baltimore in the near future.

In addition, a web site is now up and running on the Maryland Motor Vehicle (MVA) website (<http://www.marylandmva.com/DriverSafety/Older/default.htm>). Information includes tips for safe driving, self-assessment tools, tools for families and caregivers, older driver statistics, information on the quarterly Maryland Research Consortium on Older Drivers, and many links and resources. For more information on the Older Driver Emphasis Area team contact Carl Soderstrom at csoderstrom@mdot.state.md.us.

Emphasis Area Update Cont

Young Drivers

The Young Driver Emphasis Area Team is moving forward on a number of initiatives including the following:

- Baltimore County's "I AM" pilot program has finished its second year at Owings Mills High School.
- Programs that resulted from the February 20, 2008 Southern Maryland Traffic Safety Summit continue to move forward. St. Mary's County Public Schools recently conducted *Alive at 25* program assemblies for teen drivers as part of their school initiative, Charles County high schools developed student led initiatives to reduce the frequency of fatal crashes, and Calvert County continues to conduct Graduated Driver's License (GDL) enforcement at locations where citations have been frequently issued to young drivers.
- The success of Southern Maryland's DriveCam program, which has enrolled a total of 191 families, resulted in an expansion to Montgomery and Baltimore counties. The "Courtesy on the Road" was also expanded to Kent and Queen Anne counties.

To better assist parents with teaching their teens to drive, several Maryland grant-funded pilot projects are under way.

- MHSO has grant-funded a pilot project by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and the National Study Center to assess the effectiveness of parent involvement in managing their teen's learning to drive experience. Focus groups in select areas and statewide surveys are being done over

the summer to determine knowledge, parenting styles, and social norms during the first year of provisional licensure and independent driving. Information from this assessment will be used to send the right message at the right time to parents of teens early in the learning process.

- "Critical 60," a pilot project funded by MHSO to the Howard County Community College, is developing a website and forming focus groups comprised of recent and future mentors and teen drivers. Information will be used to develop successful methods of improving the competency of family members serving as driving mentors and reduce the level of task-interfering anxiety for new teen drivers.

MVA continues to update the driver education curriculum, and has incorporated parent information to accommodate the new requirement that schools provide a parent orientation as part of the driver education curriculum.

The new e-certification, which was effective as of January 2009, allows driving schools to submit information on course completion and test scores tied directly to the learner's permit number electronically to MVA. For more information on the Young Drivers Emphasis Area team contact Debbie Jennings, the Calvert County CTSP, at jennindk@co.cal.md.us or Michelle Atwell from MHSO at matwell@sha.state.md.us.

Motorcycles

The Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) and the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) conducted a motorcycle specific law enforcement training session on April 6 at the Frederick County Law Enforcement Center. Peter Moe from the MHSO and Phil Sause from the MVA taught this session to 40 officers from Carroll and Frederick

counties. The four hour session provide information on motorcycle crash data, ways to identify impaired motorcycle operators, completing enforcement detail forms, and identifying Department of Transportation (DOT) compliant motorcycle helmets.

The MHSO in cooperation with the MVA conducted a Motorcycle Safety Summit for stakeholders with the purpose of developing 2009 strategies for public awareness, rider training (formal and informal), law enforcement initiatives, and impaired riding. Four areas of concentration were identified and work groups assigned to create the work plan.

The MVA, through a MHSO grant, purchased two HONDA SMART motorcycle simulators for use at motorcycle events and for rider training pilot tests. The simulators can help individuals learner basic operating skills and to develop hazard perception skills.

The MVA also implemented the data collection portion of the NHTSA Promising Practice Grant in February. This will allow the Administration to determine exposure and training information from individuals who apply for a motorcycle license and complete a rider training course, and makes Maryland the first state to create this type of data file. This file will collect crash information, citation, and conviction information and general information regarding miles traveled on a motorcycle. For more information contact Andy Krajewski at MVA akrajewski@mdot.state.md.us or Peter Moe pmoe@sha.state.md.us.



Emphasis Area Team Update Cont.

Truck and Bus Safety

Commercial vehicle traffic enforcement continues with more than 30,800 citations and warnings issued for a variety of moving violations. Maryland enforcement agencies also conducted over 30,000 driver/vehicle inspections, bringing the total to 107,696 for CY2008; a number that is higher than ever before. This may be due, in part, to an increase in the number of agencies participating in commercial vehicle operations from 15 to 18. Commercial vehicle audits and compliance reviews have also resulted in \$51,000 in fines for the 2nd FY quarter alone (more than three times the fines in the previous quarter).

In an effort to conduct more electronic inspections, the Public Service Commission (PSC) purchased five laptop computers and portable printers so that inspections will no longer have to be handwritten. Several other local agencies made purchases of computer equipment that will help to streamline the data transfer process. For more information on truck and bus safety, contact John Rotz at jrotz@mdot.state.md.us.

Safety Champion

John Kuo: Where the Three S's Meet the 4 E's

For John Kuo, Administrator of the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), traffic safety is a passion. As the father of two sons, he readily admits he has a personal stake in how well the MVA is ensuring the people who use the state's roadways are safe. "I know first hand the devastating consequences of unsafe driving. When I was a teenager, I lost a brother and sister in a car crash.

It is something that never leaves you, even after many years," he said.

John Kuo has translated that passion into action by stepping forward and taking a leadership role in the implementation of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). "Safety is one of the three S's in MVA's mission statement which is to establish the Administration as *safety oriented, service driven, and security focused*," he said. MVA is the lead agency for five of the SHSP emphasis areas including distracted driving, older drivers, young drivers, motorcycle safety, and truck and bus safety.

To further strengthen MVA's commitment to safety, Kuo created a Driver Safety Division which consolidates many of the driver safety programs within the agency. "The Division gathers information on best practices, strategies, countermeasures, and approaches that could impact driver safety in Maryland," he said. This information is then shared with the MVA Executive Team and the Driver Programs Divisions to develop policies and practices and for use in safety messages to the public.

MVA's involvement in the SHSP brings the experience of nationally recognized experts and model programs including the Medical Advisory Board (MAB), which reviews the safety abilities of individuals referred by the courts, family members, law enforcement officers, and others. "At MVA our model promotes mobility for life. We believe someone who is 75 years old can be just as physically fit to drive as someone who is 65. The MAB makes sure that they are," Kuo said.



John Kuo
MVA Administrator

Individuals in the motorcycle safety area are also recognized specialists and are helping the SHSP Motorcycle Safety emphasis area team develop an effective program to bring down the number of fatalities and serious injuries involving motorcycle riders. The MVA brings their expertise to other motor vehicle agencies through participation in the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) where John Kuo serves as Vice President of the AAMVA Region 1.

One of the problems facing states throughout the nation as they implement their SHSP's is the difficulty in maintaining interest and commitment. "We do not view participation in the SHSP as extra work, it is part of our mission. Every new employee at MVA receives training on our three S's so they understand that safety is part of the job," Kuo said.

Kuo noted participation in the SHSP has strengthened the partnerships the Administration has with both the State Highway Administration and the Highway Safety Office. "It has taken some time to get to where we are today, but we recognize our work is definitely not done. "We will continue to stay involved because the safety of every Maryland driver is a responsibility we take very seriously," he said.

**For more information on
Maryland's Strategic
Highway Safety Plan**

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